

Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Doses for Adults and Adolescents

A COVID-19 booster shot is an extra dose of the vaccine given after the protection provided by the original shot(s) decreases over time. Another dose can “boost” your immune system’s ability to fight the disease and maintain strong protection from severe illness from COVID-19. While COVID-19 vaccines are incredibly effective at preventing severe illness from COVID-19, natural immunity and vaccine immunity wane over time. Boosters can restore protection against serious illness and death from COVID-19, and are effective against Omicron and other variants.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend a **single booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine for people age 5 years and older**. Children and teens age 5-17 years can receive a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Adults can choose any authorized COVID-19 vaccine* for their booster dose.

Millions of Americans age 5 years and older are eligible for COVID-19 booster shots.

- Those who originally received a two-dose series of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine should get a booster five months after their last dose.
- Those who originally received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine should get a booster two months after their last dose.
- There are different COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. These individuals should get an additional dose with their primary vaccination series to strengthen the initial immune response, as well as a booster dose when eligible. The intervals between doses vary based on the vaccine dose initially received.

Second booster doses

People who are at the highest risk for severe illness or death from COVID-19 may choose to add a second booster dose to strengthen protection. The FDA and CDC have authorized a **second booster dose for certain individuals**, based on their individual benefits and risks.

- People age 50 and older who received an initial mRNA booster dose (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) **at least four months ago should receive a second booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine**. *A second booster dose may be most beneficial for people who are age 65 and older, or who are age 50-64 with certain [underlying medical conditions](#).*
- People age 12 and older who are [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#) who received an initial mRNA booster dose (Pfizer or Moderna) **at least four months ago should receive a second booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine** (Pfizer, age 12+; Moderna, age 18+). *This means individuals age 12 years and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised may receive as many as five doses – the recommended three-dose primary series for people who are immunocompromised, plus two booster doses.*
- In addition, adults who received a **primary vaccine and booster dose of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine at least 4 months ago may receive a second booster dose using an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna)**.

People who are now eligible to receive a second booster dose are encouraged to talk to their healthcare providers to assess individual risks and the benefits of another dose in strengthening ongoing protection.

TERMINOLOGY

Primary series: Generally, an initial two-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Additional dose: A third primary series dose given at least four weeks after the initial two doses of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or a dose of an mRNA vaccine given four weeks after a Johnson & Johnson vaccination to people who likely did not have a protective immune response to the initial vaccinations because they are moderately or severely immunocompromised.

Booster dose: A dose given to people who have received a primary series. The intent is to boost immunity because protection is likely to have waned over time.

BOOSTER DOSE ELIGIBILITY AND TIMING

If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine: You should receive a booster dose **two months** after receiving the initial dose. An mRNA vaccine is recommended, but the Johnson & Johnson vaccine can be given as the first booster if you cannot receive an mRNA vaccine due to allergies to the vaccines or their ingredients. If you received a primary vaccine and booster dose of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine, you may choose to receive a **second booster dose using an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna)** four months after the Johnson & Johnson booster dose.

If you received the Pfizer-BioNTech (5 or older) or the Moderna vaccine (18 or older): You should receive a booster dose **five months** after receiving the second dose.

- If you are age 50 or older, you **should receive** a second booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine four months after receiving the first booster dose.
- A second booster dose may be most beneficial for people who are age 65 and older, or who are age 50-64 with certain [underlying medical conditions](#).

If you are a moderately to severely **immunocompromised patient age 5 years or older and received an additional (third) dose of Pfizer vaccine:** You should receive a booster (fourth) dose **five months** after receiving the third dose. If you are age 12 or older, you should receive a second booster (fifth) dose four months after receiving the first booster dose.

If you are a moderately to severely **immunocompromised patient age 18 or older and received an additional (third) dose of Moderna vaccine:** You should receive a booster (fourth) dose **three months** after receiving the additional (third) dose. You may choose to receive a second booster (fifth) dose four months after receiving the first booster dose.

If you are a moderately to severely **immunocompromised patient age 18 or older and received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and an additional dose of an mRNA vaccine:** You are eligible for a booster (fourth) dose **two months** after the last dose.

MIX-AND-MATCH BOOSTERS

If you are 18 or older, you may choose which vaccine you receive as a booster dose. Some people may prefer the vaccine type that they originally received, and others may prefer to get a different vaccine type. **This mix-and-match approach only applies to additional/booster doses.** If you are age 5-17 years, you must receive the Pfizer vaccine for your booster dose.

** The [COVID-19 mRNA vaccines](#) developed by Pfizer and Moderna should be given in most cases. The FDA has limited the emergency use authorization for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to individuals 18 and older who are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine due to a severe reaction to a past mRNA dose or allergies to vaccine ingredient or who would otherwise not receive a COVID-19 vaccination.*

PRODUCT INFORMATION

- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(ages 5-11 years\)](#)
- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers \(ages 12 years and older\)](#)
- [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers](#)

WHEN AND WHERE TO GET A BOOSTER SHOT

Vaccines are widely available at many locations across the state, including local health departments, pediatricians, family physicians, community health centers, adult and children's hospitals, and pharmacies. Ohioans are encouraged to call their provider for more information or visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634) to locate a provider or make an appointment.

There is no out-of-pocket cost for a COVID-19 vaccine. Your provider may ask for your insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid information because providers can charge an administration fee to insurance. You will not have to pay a fee directly.

Parental consent required: Children younger than age 18 who are not emancipated must have parental or legal guardian consent for any vaccine. A parent or legal guardian generally should accompany the minor to receive the vaccine, unless the administration of the vaccine occurs in a physician's office, school-based or school-associated clinic setting, or similar setting.

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov

For long-term care facility or congregate living residents and staff: Facilities will administer vaccines to residents and staff; specifically, nursing homes and assisted living facilities will use Ohio's COVID-19 Vaccine Maintenance Program, and state-owned institutional settings and veterans homes will vaccinate eligible staff and residents.

Bring your vaccine card: Ohioans are encouraged to bring their existing COVID-19 vaccine card to be updated. If you cannot find your vaccine card, you should first contact your original vaccine provider to ask if they can locate your records. If the provider is unable to assist, please contact your local health department. If the health department is unable to assist, please review this information on [how to mail a request for your vaccination records to the Ohio Department of Health](#). You will not be able to obtain a new vaccine card by request, but will be able to access your vaccination records. If you do not have your original vaccine card, you can still receive your booster dose.

Updated May 20, 2022

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1- 833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.